



City of Westbrook

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

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**WESTBROOK PLANNING BOARD
TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2010, 7:00 P.M.
WESTBROOK HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM 114
MINUTES**

Present: Ed Reidman, (Chair) (Ward 5), Rene Daniel (Vice-Chair) (Ward 1), Dennis Isherwood (Ward 2), Cory Fleming (At Large), Greg Blake (At Large), Robert Morrill (Alternate)

Absent: Scott Herrick (Ward 3), Michael Taylor (Alternate)

Staff: Molly Just, Richard Gouzie

Chairman Reidman called the Westbrook Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room 114 of the Westbrook High School. Chairman Reidman explained the purpose of a Public Hearing is to hear Public input.

1. Call to Order

Continuing Business

2. **Site Plan, Subdivision and Village Review Overlay Zone – 917 Main Street – St. Germain & Associates, Inc.** on behalf of Westbrook Housing for the construction of a 3-unit live/work condominium building on an approximately 0.11 acre site located at 917 Main Street. Tax Map: 32, Lot: 106, Zone: City Center District, General Development Shoreland Zone, Downtown Housing Overlay District and Village Review Overlay Zone.

Rene Daniel I am employed with Westbrook Housing and will not be recusing myself because I will not make any money or receive a promotion from my decision on this project.

Ed Reidman does anyone have any problems with Mr. Daniel sitting in and voting?
Seeing none, do we have anything from the Staff?

Molly Just lets go right to the presentation.

Guy Gagnon Development Director for Westbrook Housing, as you recall we came before you with a demolition request of the building that was a safety hazard and now we are looking forward to jump starting this project with something that is new and exciting. I will introduce the people who will be speaking, Brian Curley with PDT Architects, Mark St. Germaine with St Germaine & Associates, Dick Begin from Westbrook Housing and Peter Delphonso from St. Germaine & Associates.

The project has been presented as condominiums now it is presented as attached units, the land will be in common and the units themselves will be owned individually; however there will be covenants

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similar to a condo association that will restrict certain uses and how things are managed. It will be a less complicated way to separate the property.

Thus far we have had neighborhood meeting with fairly good representation of the people in the area. We have listened to the concerns and have incorporated some of the concerns into the plan. In addition we have met with some people in the area individually to get their feedback and in addition to that we met with a local artisan group to discuss potential aspects of people who would like to purchase here from the artists' community. To this point we have had very strong reception from any of the interested parties and are very satisfied to receive the support of the community as is evident tonight with the lack of an audience showing no opposition.

One comment to the Staff's recommendation for the street scape is to do complete the street scape now rather than to wait for the City to do those, primarily we do not want to have a building with a barren street front.

Another comment is the building shows balconies on the third floor level, which we would like to, have included in the approval instead of having to come back for administrative approvals at some time in the future. We prefer to have those approved as part of the project, knowing full well that is would be a buyer option as to whether they would like to have the balcony added or not.

Brian Curley, PDT Architects I have a power point presentation that shows the exterior and floor plans of the building. The first slide shows the exterior of the building. The building has a basement, commercial space, then the living space on the second and third floors with attached walls between the units.

The exterior has ground faced block with vinyl windows. The building structure maintains the street edge and the integrity of Main Street. There is a cornice above with a flat roof or a rubber membrane roof. We are still working through the color issue. There is a high r value for windows, thermal qualities for the roof as well as the walls. We are working hard to have a high r value for an operational aspect they do not cost a lot to heat and cool.

The second slide shows the unit plans from the basement, first, second and third floors. The units are 16 feet wide by 40 feet deep. The first level includes the store front with a garage in the back, the second level has the living room and a dining room with the kitchen towards the back of the unit and the upper level has two bedrooms with a shared bathroom.

The third slide shows the exterior elevations showing the south elevation, store front entries with the street lighting between the two units. The east elevation, alleyway or Dana Street side shows the low plantings ground faced block and the store front. Going around to the other side facing Gorham side of Main Street you can see the store front, windows and the balcony on the third floor. On the backside it shows the balcony should a perspective owner chooses that option. This is not a huge cantilever off the back; we are talking about a four foot balcony. On the North side you can see the balconies and how they work with the garage entrances below.

**Showed the building elevations around the entire building with a moving image.

** Showed sample of stone face – passed around to see what material looks like.

Mark St. Germain St. Germain & Associates, Inc. on behalf of Westbrook Housing explained aspects of the construction of a 3-unit live/work condominium building on an approximately 0.11 acre site located at 917 Main Street. Tax Map: 32, Lot: 106, Zone: City Center District, General Development Shoreland Zone, Downtown Housing Overlay District and Village Review Overlay Zone.

The site is on .11 acres, 4500 square feet. You can not tell from the visuals but it is small. The is room for vehicular access to the rear of the units, the rest is building and landscaping.

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The building that this replaced had the short end on the street and it was a bigger building. The foot print was 2700 feet and this is going to be a 1920 square foot print on the ground. It is a three story above ground building with 5900 square feet of space. We have reoriented it so the long side is along Main Street. That allows area out back for vehicles to come in and access the bays.

All the abutters are commercial, across the street and on either side and behind the building. In the City Center District there are no setback requirements. However the front of the building is four feet off the property line. There is an existing sidewalk and if I am not mistaken the street scape plan calls for the sidewalk to be widened further. We intend to meet the existing sidewalk and rebuild that. We will build the street side added on later could be matched. The intention would be to get it done now so when the building is done you could occupy it as we do not know when the City project will get underway. It is about ten feet from the curbing now.

There will be two red maples up front which is in keeping with the plan. It will look a lot different then the last building that was there. Coming from the west you would see vegetation on the side. There is a little patio area that is screened and has actually built it with the same material as the building. Beyond that is a lilac and feathered grass and an ash tree with some barberry. From the east side you will see more feathered grass and vegetation on the side of the building. We did what we could with the size we have to dress it up with landscaping for the small property that is there. There is a wooded guard rail to segregate the two properties.

Stormwater management is always a consideration, again it is a small lot and everything goes to a storm drain on Dana Street. It will still go to the storm drain. You will have some infiltrations where landscaped areas are and the flat roof run off will be collected and discharged directly to the drain underground. The stormwater to the rear will go to the tree filter box and is built in a large container filled with growth media and the stormwater will drain through that into an under drain system to the same storm drain system. The first flush of any rain storm will go through the vegetation and will be cleaned rather then just flowing directly into the storm drain system.

Utilities as submitted are all adequate for the three residential properties.

Ed Reidman questions? Is the application complete, with exception Recreation Conservation Commission?

Molly Just the Village Review process has not been completed and we are still waiting for documents such as the covenants for the condominiums.

Cory Fleming the Village Review process is not done?

Molly Just the process is not complete. The Village Review committee has met as part of the requirements for the Village Review Overlay Zone we have to send out notice to abutters and we did not get this application until last week. I give it about a week for people to comment.

Ed Reidman the indication on the document is that it was received on the 23rd of February.

Molly Just the larger application has that date, the Village Review is a separate application.

Robert Morrill you are changing this from condominium association to what?

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Guy Gagnon basically it would be three attached units and the only thing in common would be the ground, so there will be some covenants that will go with the deed dealing with the common land but they will not be condominiums.

Robert Morrill so there will be covenants for snowplowing and those types of things. I had a question on the patio as to who owns it?

Guy Gagnon the patio space will be in common.

Robert Morrill I would change the windows to doors if you get a balcony approval.

Guy Gagnon we have planed it that it would be a purchaser's option

Robert Morrill on the right side where Dana Street goes down and we have the vegetation there, I noticed that is a street. Why is there vegetation rather than a sidewalk?

Guy Gagnon that is part of the property not in the right of way and given the uncertainty of what is going to happen with the Street Scape and Main Street we put that there and if the City of Westbrook wanted to put a sidewalk in that area, it would easily be undone.

Robert Morrill at this point in time if people are walking to the rear of the building, there is no sidewalk and they would need to walk in the street.

Guy Gagnon the rear entrance is basically for the residents and is not for the public.

Ed Reidman are there any other questions or comments?

Rene Daniel I have some concerns about some unknowns with the second presenter. What is the roof top color? What is the basement height? Do the windows open or not open?

Guy Gagnon a couple things I was going to address that ion the Planning Board memo there is some environmentally components is the word "shall incorporate these" like the light colored roof. We would like a separate area for that and the domestic solar powered hot water being "may" rather than "shall" depending on cost and so forth. The light colored roof is typically included in green elements and we felt that it did not fit in well with the project and would rather not have that part of it at all. If it has to stay in there we would prefer to have it as an option rather than as a requirement. As far as the windows our intention is not to have a central air conditioning system so we would definitely have operable windows to facilitate the air flow.

Rene Daniel I can understand your explanation however the very last comment is anything that has been said and if it is not clear it is hard for me to expect Mr. Gouzie to do his job.

Guy Gagnon what I am saying is we will have operable windows in the commercial space. The other of those two green elements we prefer to have as options instead of requirements.

Rene Daniel first floor entrance, can you give me a little more information? Is it one step? Is it equal to the ground? Is it two steps?

Brian Curley the first floor entrance is level with Main Street so it is a handy capped accessible entrance.

Rene Daniel bicycle rack is that going to be provided by the builder?

Brian Curley he does not have it on the plan.

Rene Daniel are balconies going to be an option and it is not going to be built? You just want the permission to do it if the owner chooses?

Guy Gagnon it will be an option for purchasers unless we can do it financially up front and it will defiantly be an option for the buyers and would like it part of the approval rather than having to have an extra step.

Rene Daniel I would have it there rather than not. I spent a lot of time on the street scape plan and am – extremely proud of the street scape plan. I am going to make sure that the City comes up with money to complete this rather than tax payer.

Guy Gagnon as far as the balcony area that is our proposal but will be willing to listen to what the Board wishes.

Dennis Isherwood what are the requirements for parking on a facility like this?

Richard Gouzie the requirements are one parking space per unit.

Dennis Isherwood when this building was torn down the eyesore, we discussed a plaque for the new building...

Guy Gagnon you wanted something in memory of the previous building?

Dennis Isherwood yes

Guy Gagnon that would be no problem we will work with the Historical Society and create an attractive feature on the left of the building.

Dennis Isherwood very well

Cory Fleming I normally do not add my comments but I feel very strongly and need to say something this time. The design of this building is lovely but it is something I would expect to see in East Boston not down town Westbrook. When we have so many interesting historic elements in the down town area, from the Mill and some of the older buildings that could have been reflected in this building and when we saw the initial sketch during the demolition I do not see reflected in this building and am disappointed. I realize that with this project we need to go forward for the down town area but I just want to express my disappointment.

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Robert Morrill as I was thinking of the third floor and the balconies, from a safety fire stand point what was the planned egress from the third floor in case of emergency on the first floor or the egress from the second floor?

Brian Curley the windows are sized as egress windows. You have the stairs as the primary means of egress that runs all the way through the building separated with fire rated partitions from the work side of the building. The second means of egress are egress windows or the balcony.

Robert Morrill this has been passed by the Fire Chief/Police Chief?

Molly Just that is correct

A few things starting with the balconies: the balconies were not shown on the site plan application. The way Westbrook works is if it is not shown, you can not do it. I basically enabled them through a condition. If the applicant would like to put them on a plan and come back to you for Mylar signature then they will have been approved already. You can always do less then you had approved, so they could just not do them. I would be fine with that.

A few other things, I had asked for a list of environmentally components that could be made conditions of approval. I put a number of them as conditions of approval though it was my understanding that they had been vetted and they would be fine as conditions of approval.

I have a question regarding ADA accessibility and the sidewalk as proposed...there is an ADA ramp on the eastern side of the building but there is not one on the western side and I am wondering if the engineer could go over that.

Ed Reidman what are you going to use the basement for? Storage? I will remind the Board the conditions as seen on the site plan are proposed by the staff. It concerns me not that we are trying to do things and create green buildings but the question in my mind is how far the staff can go to implement this without the Board of approval? My interpretation of the items shown on page 6 under conditions number 2 building envelopes and finishes are proposed to both the developer and the Planning Board. The Planning Board should judge whether they are all realistic in today's economy or whether they are not realistic in today's economy.

When we talked today you mentioned a conflict to sidewalk area? Has that been resolved? If you look into the street scape and look at what is proposed for Main Street, it is proposed for a 10 to a 15 foot sidewalk. Under your proposal, what is the width of the sidewalk?

Guy Gagnon the public portion is 7 feet and the portion on our property is an additional 4 ½ feet, a total of 11 ½ feet.

Can I address the issue going back to the environmentally proposal? Our original proposal as seen in our packet did not propose that we would defiantly do all those things. We had made a special not to say that our intent was to try to incorporate these but we did not necessarily guarantee that we were going to do these. We always like to do things that are green and try to keep the operational cost down as long as it is possible. We are willing to do 90% of these but not those two as noted before.

Ed Reidman would you repeat the two that you would like to see removed?

Guy Gagnon light colored roof and solar hot water system.

Ed Reidman that is under subsection B 2 and A3.

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You are going to plant two trees in the street right of way which is fine. What is the responsibility of the developer Mr. Gouzie after the building has been accepted, do they become City property and the City will maintain them?

Richard Gouzie if they are on City property we will have to maintain them.

Ed Reidman we have talked about the balconies and street grids. If we had not resolved the balcony and they had to come back for Staff review, is there a fee involved with that?

Molly Just yes

Ed Reidman how much is that fee?

Molly Just \$250.00

Ed Reidman I can understand why they do not want to come back and talk to you.

Molly Just they did not put it on the plan.

Robert Morrill on page number 6 item number 3 the language covering the deck, it says the deck will not extend more than 10 feet. Did I hear 4 feet? If so, is that a change?

Guy Gagnon that was language put in by the Planning Department. We have never intended to be more than 4 feet.

Robert Morrill so does this need to be changed to reflect...

Ed Reidman no because...

Molly Just I honestly do not see the balcony as an issue. I am a huge fan of outdoor space, on the air or on the ground. If the unit owner wants to build a bigger balcony and it meets our code as it will require a building permit, more power to them. Usually a deeper deck is not going to be any deeper than 10 feet. I say up too, leave it ...

Robert Morrill that is fine, I understand.

Ed Reidman you can do less not more.

Rene Daniel remember the street scape? Do you recall what...there was something unique going in front of that space in the roadway was it going to be a bump out?

Molly Just on street parking

Rene Daniel yes.

Ed Reidman has a copy of the plan now.

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Ed Reidman I have not heard any strong objections to the plan as presented. We have talked about small parts of it. In order to move the project forward we have to be able to declare the application complete. Is anyone interested in taking a site walk? Public hearing?

Editors note No interest

Ed Reidman we will meet again on the next meeting to vote.

Guy Gagnon I understand where you are coming from but our desire and feeling is that we actually did go before the Village Review Committee some time ago and the application for the actual review was...the people notified for the Village Review is the same list that were notified of this meeting also the same list of the people that took part in the neighborhood meeting. So we feel for a couple of days by the standard we feel that we have met the notifications and getting Public input.

The other issue as the Planner has noted regarding the Recreation Committee will not be a major discussion and an amount was mentioned that we would have to contribute, we would be more than happy to say we will contribute that. If the committee decided that something else was desired then we would have to come back to you to get that changed. We would prefer to have our approval this evening subject to the satisfaction of the Recreation Committee. We would not get any building permits until that was satisfied. I am just making the case and we understand that you have your rules but we felt that we have met the community interest and have gone through all the processes adequately. We would prefer to have approval this evening. We understand either way.

Ed Reidman any care to make a motion? Seeing none we will see you on April 6th.

Rene Daniel on behalf of the Westbrook Middle School building committee I would like to extend an invitation to everyone on the Planning Board and in the audience to please come and participate in the celebration Saturday at 12:00 at the new Westbrook Middle School and Westbrook Professional Art Center.

Molly Just I would like to extend to the Public to fill out an application to participate in the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. We are about to embark on a re-write of the City's Comprehensive Plan, that guides the long term development of the future.

3. Adjourn

Respectfully submitted by Linda Gain PECE Administrative Assistant

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